

Roman Leppert

Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz

**Joanna Minta (2016). *Transitions in constructing careers by young adults. Messages for counselling.*
Wrocław: Scientific Publishing House of the
University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław, pp. 295**

Joanna Minta's monography is a modified version of her PhD dissertation, prepared a few years ago and defended with honours at the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences of the University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław (the writer mentions it in the introduction). While reading it two simultaneous feelings accompanied me: regret that we had to wait a few years for the book to be published and joy that the dissertation is available for readers, because it has deserved to be published.

Already the title of the reviewed monography has been very precisely formulated. It indicates a topic of the dissertation – transitions in constructing a career, as well as the object to which it refers – young adults. The subtitle signals at the same time the addressee of the arrangements made in the dissertation – namely counselling and to be more precise: career counselling.

The title categories are mentioned in the first part of the monography, which consists of the first three chapters. The departure point for the writer is the period of early adulthood and its various faces. From my perspective it is particularly valuable to pay attention to the development period, which is emerging adulthood, as distinguished by Jeffrey Arnetta. What we face here is the problem of the adulthood category, which is contemporarily transformed from an objective term into a subjective phenomenon. Based on the reflections from the first chapter one can emphasise the positive aspects of Joanna Minta's writing which refer to the whole dissertation. She can simultaneously seize three perspectives: a theoretic one – taking into account the newest constructs which arise in a given area, an empiric one – concretely reporting research results (especially the newest ones) and a perspective of a changing social and cultural context, that covers the former two.

The second chapter is devoted to the career concept. Already its title suggests the change of this term meaning ("From career planning to constructing"). Here a constructivist perspective in career counselling should be particularly emphasised,

which J. Minta presents referring to three theories/concepts (of Peavy, Savickas and Guichard).

The third chapter refers to the importance of transition in constructing a career. Here we learn the meaning of a term that is crucial for the whole work and which the writer defines in the following way: „In this study I will be using a term **transition** for more and more numerous transitions and situations that cause various changes in people’s careers. On the one hand, I will be using it referring to events that have taken or have not taken place, to turning points and short-term events of less process-like character that take place in the educational and professional sphere (as, e.g. passing or failing an important exam, being made redundant, a scholarship trip), a loss of faith, falling in love, etc.). At the same time I will be defining with the term **transition** various transitions – long-term situations, experiences of a complex character which people living in a specific culture and place can experience, and which often are a specific bridge between what had been before and what happens afterwards in an individual’s life and career. To the most common **transitions** of a transition character belong the processes »assigned« to the calendar of individuals from the Western world, such as entering adulthood, becoming a parent, going from education world to the work world, defined in Western literature as *transition* or *passage*” (p. 87). The quoted sample of J. Minta’s writing allows to point out positive aspects of the language used by the writer. It is both concise and complex; however, this complexity does not mean complication, because the thoughts are expressed clearly and – what is important in a scientific dissertation – precisely. Similarly to the two previous chapters, also here J. Minta refers to Nancy M. Schlossberg’s theory which is essential for considerations on the transition theory.

The research project has been made so well, that it can serve as a model. It can be treated as a reference for those who undertake the transition problem and the wider problem of building a career in their academic theses. The confirmation of the project value can be the simplicity of the formulated research questions, which have been formulated as follows:

- How do people build their careers in early adulthood?
- Which transitions in building careers were experienced by examined people? (p. 111).

The method of biographic research chosen by the writer allows for collecting and interpreting data in such a way that the goals set in the research are met. I do admire the way J. Minta presents the organisation and course of research, as well as the choice and character of research participants.

It is impossible in a review to present the contents of chapters which include the research results (the fifth and the sixth ones). However, it is worth turning attention to their very clear structure which meets the formulated research questions and the clear analysis criteria of data gathered in the research. The transition types distinguished by the writer can be used as examples. They concern personal, educational

and professional spheres, as well as relations with others. What is important, not only does J. Minta describe them, but she also presents the biographic transitions graphically (they are placed not only in the text, but also in the attachment no. 2). This way I want to turn your attention to another value of the reviewed monography: its form, as given by the writer. Both in the text layer, as well as in the graphic one, it has been prepared very accurately and with care about a reader. He is treated seriously on the pages of that dissertation: on the one hand J. Minta adopts an assumption regarding readers' convictions which refer to foundation premises of a research intention, and on the other hand she presents results of her operations in such a way that a reader discovers a new picture of the explored reality.

The values of the reviewed dissertation are also messages for modern career counselling, which were presented in the seventh chapter. The writer included there in a sophisticated way the following issues:

- ◆ possibilities of using the research results on transitions in the life-long career counselling,
- ◆ a change of direction that is taking place nowadays in the counselling towards the counselling of building life,
- ◆ recommendations for practice resulting from own research.

The list of bibliography, both in Polish and in English, used in the dissertation is impressive. It shows the multiplicity of inspiration sources which the writer reached to.

In my reviewing practice there have been various works: both very good ones and such that should not be shown to the public at all. What dominates are theses (both monographies, as well as articles) which require smaller or bigger changes, due to various reasons about which I am not going to write here now. J. Minta's dissertation deserves only the best notes. Each element of the monography reviewed by me, namely:

- ◆ the assumptions made by the writer,
- ◆ a research project constructed by her,
- ◆ results of the conducted research presented in the empirical part,
- ◆ constitutes a clear and legible whole, in accordance with the latest scientific achievements in this subject.

Taking into account the arguments presented above, which refer to the undertaken problem, and the way in which it has been conceptualised; the language with which it has been presented and the form given to it by the writer I highly recommend it to readers. I predict that thanks to this monography the category of transition will become more common in the Polish literature of counselling (and maybe even wider: of social sciences), both in the descriptive aspect (as a term that allows for describing experiences connected with changes in people's careers), as well as

in the empirical aspect (that allows to make those experiences a research subject matter).

Translated from Polish by Katarzyna Szostak